

SHOULD WIVES BE TOLD? YES, DECLARES COUNTESS OF WARWICK

— BY MARY BOYLE O'REILLY.

London, England, July 18.—“First, we'll have tea,” decided Lady Warwick and bustled herself with an imposing silver equipage. Her hospitable absorption gave me an opportunity to observe the best known peeress in England.

We sat in an immense library lined with aged books. Above the towering cases hung famous family portraits. The open windows gave glimpses of a lovely garden.

“At present it is the custom for physicians to conceal the nature of certain diseases from their women patients,” said the countess. “Doctors claim that to tell a woman of such ills will not help her and is morally certain to add to her anxiety. Therefore, they remain reticent—that is silent. Theoretically this policy of silence avoids causing mental worry in addition to physical sickness. (Incidentally it prevents causing trouble in the family, for wifely questions soon lead to scenes.)

“But in actual practice concealment prevents cure. Noxious things flourish best in darkness. We fight typhoid, tuberculosis or cancer frankly. Why, then, hide cases of the highly contagious perennial pestilence?

“The danger is appalling: fourteen per cent—seven in every fifty, of the outpatients in a gynaecological hospital are hopeless victims. Only in recent years have medical men begun to realize that numbers of disorders, many of them of the gravest kind, are due to the great scourge.

“A terrible responsibility rests on the shoulders of the medical profession. To leave an unsuspecting woman ignorant of what is the matter with her is very possibly to leave her without efficient treatment, very probably to expose her to future danger, such danger as will shatter physically and spiritually, even lead

to the birth of crippled, blind or feeble-minded children.

“It is a sin altogether to subject a perfectly innocent woman to physical and mental degeneration without her consent. One of my best friends, a martyr if there ever was one, has just died by inches in awful tortures—and never knew. Her pitiful illness took every sort of form. Everyone realized what was the matter, yet no one told the truth to the victim. These fell diseases of which far too little is known are fiercely contagious and all but intractable to cure.

“My own feeling is that if human beings take themselves in hand there need be no disease. I go so far as to say that all disease is perfectly preventable. As for myself I should never dream of being anything but absolutely healthy, of knowing that my children were in perfect health. On this so-called problem of ‘Should Wives Be Told?’ speak from the point of prevention.

“There is absolutely no reason why a married woman should not be told the truth and the whole truth in this matter. There is no question whether a married woman should be informed of the true nature of the disease from which she is suffering. There is no reason why she should not be informed of the appalling danger which menaces her and her children.

“Physicians must change their policy—be compelled by law to so change it. Such legislation would be a distinct advance toward recognition of the fact that the same law of morality is equally binding on men as on women.”

— O — O — TODAY'S HEALTHOGRAM

The people who become deaf in middle life are generally suffering from the after-effects of colds which have traveled from the nose to the ears. Thickening of the ear-drum is another cause of moderate deafness.